

Water Lines

SDW Hotline Report

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Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & email)	Percent of Total* Questions
Local Drinking Water Quality	707	12
Consumer Confidence Report	681	12
Tap Water Testing	508**	9
Home Water Treatment Units	389	7
Cryptosporidium	308	5
Lead	258	4
Household Wells	247	4
Other Drinking Water Background	215	4
Other EPA (programs)	207	4
Coliforms	201	4

*A total of 5,705 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and email) in July 2002. These top 10 topics represent 65% of the total.

**Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 28% of the tap water testing questions

Calls	E-mails	Total***
3,800	273	4,073

Published Monthly

See past reports at

<http://intranet.epa.gov/ow/hotline>

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National

Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791 or

(877) EPAWATER

For More Information Contact:

Harriet Hubbard, EPA Project Officer

(202) 564-4621

Operated by Booz Allen Hamilton

Under Contract #GS-10F-0090J

The Hotline Monthly Report for July 2002 focuses on the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) and questions directed to the Hotline from both the regulated community and consumers. The deadline for CCR delivery to the consumer was July 1, 2002. The volume of inquiries related to the CCR is reflected in our statistics both for June and July 2002.

Monthly Trends

Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) related questions totaled 681 during the month of July making it the second most asked about topic area. As illustrated in the chart, the call volume from October 2000 through July 2002 reveals a predictable surge of CCR related questions beginning in the spring months, peaking in June, then tapering off through July and August. June 2002 generated 841 CCR related questions, representing 16 percent of the total questions answered. In July 2002, CCR questions represented 12 percent of the total questions answered by the Hotline.



CCR Inquiry Analysis

Analysis of Caller Concerns

Each year, public water systems across the country send out consumer confidence reports (CCRs) detailing the previous year's water quality results. These reports provide valuable information to citizens who receive their water from public water systems. The Safe Drinking Water Hotline is available to assist individuals in reviewing their CCRs, and the Hotline's telephone number is published in these reports. Hotline Information Specialists respond to a host of questions related to CCRs, ranging from how to obtain copies of the reports, to interpretation of specific CCRs in the context of the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. While many CCR recipients are satisfied with the reports and understand the information that the reports present, Hotline Information Specialists frequently receive inquiries from individuals who have difficulty in reading and understanding the report. While the contents of the report are largely dictated by regulation, its format and complexity often confuse, frustrate, or anger callers. Some callers worry that the report is indicating that their water is contaminated, while others question the utility and cost of producing the report. Hotline Information Specialists listen to the callers and suggest additional guidance and appropriate referrals to help the callers. Listed in the table below are some of the common questions/comments that the Hotline received in July 2002, the Hotline's analysis of these questions, and suggestions for potential improvements for future CCRs.

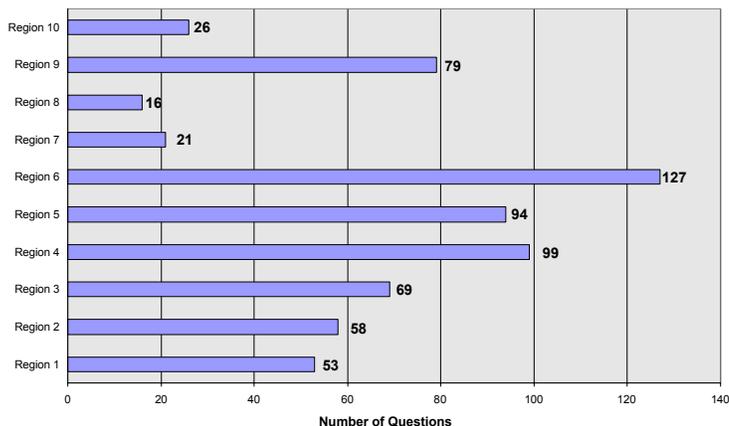
Common Questions / Comments	Analysis	Suggestion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Is my water safe?" 	Over 50% of callers ask if the water is safe. Callers frequently mistake it for a health advisory or notification warning them of unsafe water conditions.	Provide clearly stated language at beginning of report detailing the purpose of the report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I have a PhD and I cannot decipher this thing!" "Can't they just tell us in plain English?" 	Callers seem confused when reading the report. They complain about the complexity of the report or the lack of explanation needed to understand the report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide overview paragraph of general water quality that callers can review before reading the table of detected contaminants Water system personnel should be prepared to explain the report including the contaminant table
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Why is your number in the report if you can't tell me about the quality of my water?" 	Callers often frustrated that the Hotline number is the only number on the report or that the water system number is not prominently displayed.	Provide prominently displayed contact numbers with a detailed descriptions of services provided by each
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Why are we wasting the taxpayers money on this?" "They wasted thousands of dollars on this slick report and my water still smells and looks awful!" 	Many callers express frustration and anger believing they incur the cost of producing a document that they consider to be undecipherable.	Provide general language on the usefulness of the report and increase readability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I live in an apartment. How can I obtain a CCR?" 	Citizens living in apartments or condominiums feel they are kept in the dark about water quality because they are not directly receiving the CCR	Provide more explicit instruction to building managers or associations for posting the CCR report

In responding to these inquiries, Hotline Information Specialists provide clarification by detailing the purpose of the report, explaining the elements in the report, and offering fact sheets and local contact recommendations. Most often, however, callers just want someone to be empathetic and to listen to their concerns.

Geographic Distribution of CCR Questions

Based on the individuals who indicated the states from which they were calling, the following graph and table depict the number of CCR questions the Hotline received from each EPA Region and the top 10 most frequently called from states.

Regional Distribution of CCR Questions



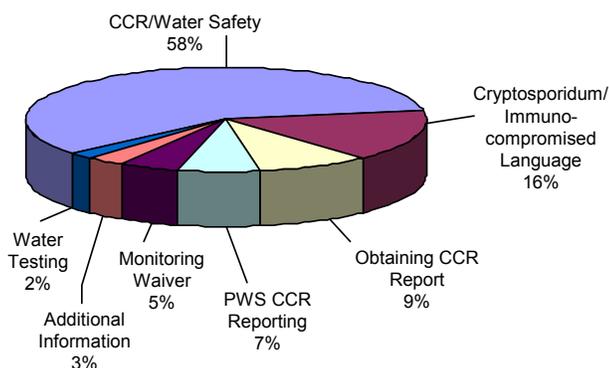
Top Ten States with Highest Number of CCR Questions

State	Number of CCR Questions
Texas	100
California	63
Florida	47
Pennsylvania	42
New Jersey	41
Illinois	31
Massachusetts	22
Ohio	21
Virginia	16
Georgia	16

Top 10 Frequently Asked Qs & As About the CCR

The CCR related questions received by the Hotline in July 2002 are grouped together into seven broad categories. To illustrate the variety of questions fielded by Hotline Information Specialists, ten of the most frequently asked CCR questions, grouped by category, are reproduced below:

Percentage Breakdown of CCR Question Categories



Consumer Confidence Report and Water Quality – 58% of total CCR inquiries

Q: I received a water quality report from my water system. Does this report indicate there is something wrong with the water, or that it's unsafe?

A: Every Community Water System (CWS) is required by law to provide its customers with a water quality report also known as a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). The CCR is a general overview of the water quality. This report lists the regulated contaminants the CWS detected in treated water and the level at which they were found for the preceding calendar year. For each detected contaminant, the report must contain the following pieces of information in tabular form; maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG), maximum contaminant level (MCL), level of contaminant detected, likely contaminant source, and notation of any violation. Additional information is available online at www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr/ccrfact.html. The Hotline can provide general information concerning the required content for the CCR. Contact your local water system for specific information about local water quality.

Q: Why is the Safe Drinking Water Hotline's 800 number listed in the report if the Hotline cannot provide local water quality information?

A: Systems are required to provide a name and telephone contact at the water system who can answer questions about the report. In addition, a toll free number for EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline is provided to offer another source of information at no cost to the customer. The Hotline provides general information about CCRs and other safe drinking water issues. Hotline staff can also direct callers to sources for additional information, and can assist people in understanding the purpose and language of the CCRs.

Cryptosporidium/Immuno-compromised Language – 16% of total CCR inquiries

Q: What does the section on cryptosporidium mean? Do we have it in our water? Does this mean I am immunocompromised? What should I do?

A: Cryptosporidium is a microorganism that can cause gastrointestinal illness. The language concerning cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants is required in all CCRs to provide information for immunocompromised persons such as individuals with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants. This language does not indicate the presence of cryptosporidium in drinking water. A guidance document developed jointly by EPA and CDC for people who may be immunocompromised is available online at www.epa.gov/safewater/crypto.html. You can order hard copies of this guidance through the SDW Hotline.

Q: Does my public water system treat the water for cryptosporidium?

A: You should contact your water system to inquire about its cryptosporidium removal practices.

Q: What are the health effects associated with cryptosporidium?

A: Cryptosporidium can cause gastrointestinal illness (e.g., diarrhea, vomiting, cramps). Other health effects information concerning cryptosporidium is available online at www.epa.gov/safewater/crypto.html.

Obtaining CCR Reports – 9% of total CCR inquiries

Q: We live in an apartment building and did not receive the CCR. How can we obtain one?

A: The water system is required to make a good faith effort to reach consumers who do not receive a water bill, such as renters, by sending building management a copy of the report for distribution. Contact your building manager or local water system to obtain a copy of the annual water quality report.

PWS CCR Reporting – 7% of total CCR inquiries

Q: We detected some unregulated contaminants that we want to include in the CCR but we cannot find the health effects language in Appendix A of 40 CFR Subpart O. Are we required to list health effects language for unregulated detected contaminants?

A: There is no federal requirement for health effect information for unregulated contaminants. 40 CFR 141.153(d)(7) requires a CWS to list the average and range at which an unregulated contaminant was detected, and suggests the inclusion of a brief explanation of the reasons for monitoring for unregulated contaminants.

Q: What regulatory agency receives a copy of the CCR certification letter?

A: Send the CCR certification letter to the State Drinking Water Office or other primacy agency.

Q: We purchase all of our water; do we have to produce a CCR?

A: Yes. A water wholesaler that sells water to a water system must provide the retailer with monitoring and other information by April of each calendar year to give the water system enough time to produce the report.

Monitoring Waiver – 5% of total CCR inquiries

Q: Why does the current CCR contain results from previous calendar years?

A: Federal regulations require that if a system is allowed to monitor for regulated contaminants less often than once a year, the table must include the date and results of the most recent sampling. Thus, the report may reflect the date and result of the last samples taken.

Useful CCR Web Sites for Community Water Systems

The Consumer Confidence Report Final Rule (63 FR 44511) and subsequent amendments can be found at the Office of Ground Water Drinking Water (OGWDW) Consumer Confidence Report Web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html

Preparing Your Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report: Revised Guidance for Water Suppliers, EPA816-R-01-003, is available at www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html

CCRWriter (v2) is a software program developed to help water suppliers create their consumer confidence reports. The software can be downloaded from the OGWDW Web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html

EPA offers the ability for public water systems to link their online CCR to the OGWDW Web site. PWSs can submit the required information at www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html

EPA has created radio and print advertisements that PWSs can use to encourage citizens to take full advantage of their consumer confidence reports. These ads can be accessed from www.epa.gov/safewater/ccr1.html

Monthly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	3,800
Total number of emails received	273
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:18
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	92.8%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of emails answered in 5 days	100%
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local DW quality	2,973
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about arsenic rule	138

Comparison to Previous Years

	Calls	Emails
July 2002	3,800	273
July 2001	2,908	337

Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. Local Water System	572	16
2. State Lab Certification	531	15
3. EPA Internet	436	12
4. NSF/WQA/UL	428	12
5. State PWSS	404	11
6. Local Public Health	176	5
7. AGWT/WSC	136	4
8. FDA/IBWA	131	4
9. Non-EPA Internet	124	3
10. Other State	84	2

*3,543 total referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in July 2002.

Did You Know?

Recycling one pound of paper saves approximately two pounds of virgin wood, one pint of fuel oil and seven gallons of water.

Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority,
Crescent City, CA

Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	Emails
Analytical Laboratories	30	2
Citizen - Private Well	399	31
Citizen - PWS	2,812	115
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	113	22
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	75	19
Environmental Groups	8	2
EPA	32	1
Other Federal Agency	17	7
Government, Local	8	9
Government, State	35	8
Government, Tribal	0	0
Spanish Speaking	26	0
International	4	18
Media	13	0
Medical Professional	10	1
Public Water System	125	11
Schools/University	28	27
Other	65	0
TOTALS	3,800	273

Daily Call Data

	Total Calls Answered	Average Wait Time mm:sec
1-July	362	00:19
2-July	290	00:20
3-July	256	00:24
5-July	165	00:13
8-July	250	00:13
9-July	204	00:13
10-July	205	00:16
11-July	178	00:11
12-July	123	00:11
15-July	151	00:41
16-July	142	00:15
17-July	156	00:15
18-July	140	00:16
19-July	129	00:14
22-July	136	00:23
23-July	119	00:13
24-July	142	00:17
25-July	124	00:17
26-July	110	00:19
29-July	151	00:22
30-July	129	00:21
31-July	138	00:23
TOTALS	3,718	00:18

Topic Categories

Category	Calls	Emails
Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts		
Chlorine	65	7
Coliforms	187	14
Cryptosporidium	308	0
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	32	10
Disinfection – Home Water	108	6
Other Microbials	32	4
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	42	4
Trihalomethane (THM)	24	0
Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)		
Arsenic	77	4
Fluoride	35	2
Methyl- <i>tertiary</i> -butyl-ether (MTBE)	11	2
Perchlorate	12	2
Phase I, II & V	75	4
Sodium Monitoring	24	0
Sulfate	7	2
Lead and Copper		
Copper	64	2
Lead	243	15
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	1	0
Radionuclides		
Radionuclides (Other)	59	2
Radionuclides (Radon)	119	4
Secondary DW Regulations		
Secondary DW Regulations	87	13
SDWA Background/Overview		
Definitions & Applicability	45	5
MCL List	54	7
Other Background	190	25
SDWA	21	1

Category	Calls	Emails
Water on Tap	73	1
Other DW Regulations		
Analytical Methods (DW)	32	11
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	7	0
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	670	11
DW Primacy (PWS)	1	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	6	0
Other Drinking Water Security	18	7
Public Notification (PWS)	19	1
Security Planning Grants	54	6
State Revolving Fund (DW)	2	3
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	34	2
Other Drinking Water		
Additives Program	4	1
Bottled Water	173	5
Complaints about PWS	127	11
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	27	5
Home Water Treatment Units	379	11
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	1	4
Local DW Quality	671	36
Tap Water Testing	491	17
Treatment/BATs (DW)	17	2
Drinking Water Source Protection		
Ground Water Rule	4	0
Sole Source Aquifer	1	0
Source Water/Wellhead Protect.	23	9
UIC Program	10	3
Out of Purview		
Household Wells	231	16
Non-Environmental	66	12
Non-EPA Environmental	90	36
Other EPA (Programs)	187	20
TOTALS	5,340	365

SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

July 2002

APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

NOTICES

**“Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Performance Evaluation Studies of Water and Wastewater Laboratories”
July 8, 2002 (67 FR 45112)**

EPA announced that it is planning to submit the following continuing Information Collection Request (ICR), “Performance Evaluation Studies of Water and Wastewater Laboratories,” EPA ICR No. 0234.08, to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for renewal. This ICR, OMB Control No. 2080-0021, currently expires on October 31, 2002. Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection.

**“Underground Injection Control Program Hazardous Waste Injection Restrictions; Petition for Exemption—Class I Hazardous Waste Injection Cytex Industries, Inc.”
July 10, 2002 (67 FR 45719)**

EPA announced that an exemption to the land disposal restrictions under the 1984 Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act has been granted to Cytex Industries, Inc. for five Class I injection wells. As required by 40 CFR Part 148, the company has adequately demonstrated to the satisfaction of EPA by the petition and supporting documentation that, to a reasonable degree of certainty, there will be no migration of hazardous constituents from the injection zone for as long as the waste remains hazardous.

**“EPA Science Advisory Board; Notification of Public Advisory Committee Teleconference Meeting Summary”
July 15, 2002 (67 FR 46506)**

EPA announced that the Environmental Economics Advisory Committee (EEAC) of the EPA Science Advisory Board, a chartered Federal advisory committee, will meet in a public teleconference on August 12, 2002, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern Time. At the planned teleconference, the EEAC will continue their discussions on the EPA affordability criteria under the Safe Drinking Water Act as amended in 1996.

**“EPA Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; 2003 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey”
July 16, 2002 (67 FR 46664)**

EPA announced that it is planning to submit the following proposed ICR, “2003 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey,” EPA ICR 2085.01, to OMB. Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection.

**“Announcement of Preliminary Regulatory Determinations for Priority Contaminants on the Drinking Water Contaminant Candidate List; Correction”
July 17, 2002 (67 FR 46949)**

EPA published a document in the Federal Register on June 3, 2002, announcing the preliminary regulatory determinations for priority contaminants on the Drinking Water Contaminant Candidate List. EPA inadvertently included the incorrect docket number in the ADDRESSES section. The correct docket number is W-01-03.

**“Underground Injection Control Program Revision; Aquifer Exemption Determination for Portions of the Lance Formation Aquifer in Wyoming”
July 22, 2002 (67 FR 47721)**

EPA approved the State of Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality’s revision to the State Underground Injection Control Program. Specifically, EPA approved an aquifer exemption from classification as an underground source of drinking water for portions of the Lance Formation within the Powder River Basin in Johnson County, Wyoming. EPA’s approval of this new aquifer exemption will allow COGEMA Minerals to use the newly permitted Class I injection wells to inject ground water restoration waste fluids from the Wasatch Formation into the Lance Formation.